

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5670
ANSWERED ON:30.04.2003
SHORTAGE OF ANAESTHETISTS
M. JAGANNATH

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the acute shortage of anaesthetists in Government hospitals, particularly in rural areas, causes a large number of maternal deaths as reported in the Times of India dated April 3, 2003;
- (b) if so, the facts thereof;
- (c) whether due to lack of attractive and future prospects, anaesthesia is not the preferred area of specialisation for most doctors; and
- (d) if so, the efforts made/proposed to be made by the Government to make anaesthesia, the preferred area of specialisation?

Answer

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SMT. SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a)&(b): The complications associated with pregnancy and childbirth is not always predictable and in many cases immediate treatment of pregnant women at adequately equipped and staffed referral centres/hospitals becomes necessary to save her life. One of the major problems being faced in provision of emergency obstetric care in rural areas has been the non-availability of post of specialist in Anaesthesia at the Community Health Centres (CHC) level. CHCs have sanctioned post of only four other specialists such as General Medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics & gynaecology.

(c & (d): As per available information, the post-graduate seats in the specialty of anaesthesia are readily taken up by the under-graduate doctors. However, keeping the need for doctors trained in anesthesia for provision of emergency obstetric care in view, the following initiatives have been taken as part of the Reproductive and Child (RCH) Programme.

(i) The states have been asked to increase the number of seats in Diploma course for anaesthesia in consultation with Medical Council of India (MCI). Funds for this have been committed by Government of India.

(ii) To tide over the immediate needs, states have been permitted to engage the anaesthetists from the private sector on a payment of Rs.1000/- per case for emergency obstetric cases at the sub district and CHC levels

(iii) An 18 weeks training programme for training of MBBS doctors on Life Saving Anaesthetic

(iv) skills for Emergency Obstetric care has been initiated on a pilot basis at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, based on the experience from this pilot programme, it will be extended to other medical colleges in the country.